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VOL. XX, No. 13

MONDAY, JANUARY 24, 1927

WHOLE No. 543

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## A LITTERATEUR IN THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES<sup>1</sup>

Aulus Gellius was born into an age the like of which the world has seldom, perhaps never, seen since, except in isolated instances in individual realms. Rome had reached its apex in every way; never thereafter were her boundaries farther flung or her armies to achieve new conquests. Henceforth the triumphs of her generals were to be celebrated for that costliest of victories—an enemy repelled at the border, but not crushed in his homeland. The foundations laid by Augustus had withstood even the shock of misgovernment by his degenerate successors—a token, perhaps, of their abiding firmness. Indeed, under Vespasian and Trajan fresh advances had been made, but there progress stopped. Henceforth we find decline, decadence, but not all at once. Like a slowly declining summer afternoon, the Roman Empire, the Empire of the Caesars, mellowed in a golden haze. Then, if ever, did the world bask in a peaceful and meditative reverie. That contemplation which in Cicero was but a refuge from an age full of strife and cruelty now became the order of the day. Government was ripe for a great experiment, and the age visioned by Plato came to pass. In Marcus Aurelius the theory of philosopherkingship had its first great testing, and the world was now to see what a man pure in heart, incorruptible, generous, and good could do in the way of governing wisely and well, and in suiting ideal considerations to practical problems.

The high-noon of literature, too, had likewise passed. The writers in the Age of the Antonines lived in a reflected light. Quintilian had been proud to call himself a Ciceronian, but Fronto's aim was at a purity of style distinctly pre-Ciceronian. The great lights in whose glory Fronto and his like lived were such as Cato, the Gracchi, Ennius, Lucilius, Laberius, Varro, and Quadrigarius. A conscious archaizing<sup>2</sup> was the result. Rhetoric and grammar, and all that deals with form rather than with content were exalted. It was an unimaginative age, an age in which inspiration had ceased, but, if we are interested in the spectacle of that fascinating and oft-repeated literary phenomenon, decadence, an age interesting to us who, unlike the participants therein, have the dénouement full in view.

Walter Pater, in that marvelous account which more than any other has caught the spirit that animated this age, has, among many scenes that give us a true moving-picture of the life of those times, a scene which shows us Fronto delivering to his blue-stocking audi-

ence, the précieux of the time, a recitation typical of his style and powers. Pater says, in part<sup>3</sup>:

It was an age, as abundant evidence shows, whose delight in rhetoric was but one result of a general susceptibility. Fronto's quaintly fashionable audience . . . arranging themselves at their ease among the images and flowers, these amateurs of exquisite language, with their tablets open for careful noting of all the more felicitous expressions, were ready to give themselves wholly to the intellectual treat prepared for them, applauding, blowing loud kisses through the air sometimes, at the speaker's triumphant exit from one of his long, skilfully modulated sentences, while the younger of them meant to imitate everything about him, down to the inflections of his voice and the very folds of his mantle. Certainly there was rhetoric enough:—a wealth of imagery; illustrations from painting, music, mythology, the experiences of love; a management by which subtle, unexpected meaning was brought out of familiar words, like flies from morsels of amber, to use Fronto's own figure. But with all its richness, the higher claim of this style was rightly understood to lie in gravity and self-command, and an especial care for the purities of a vocabulary exclusive of every term and phrase not stamped with the authority of the most approved ancient models.

Among the younger note-book wielders we may well picture Gellius, the eager and earnest student, a man, as Nettleship says<sup>4</sup>, "of cool head, sober judgment, and moral heart, but devoid of imaginative power". Indeed, that Gellius listened with rapt attention to the great Fronto we learn from his own statement<sup>5</sup>: *Adulescentulus Romae, priusquam Athenas concederem, quando erat a magistris auditionibusque obeundis otium, ad Frontonem Cornelium visendi gratia pergebam sermonibusque eius purissimis bonarumque doctrinarum plenis fruebar*. What weighed upon Fronto's mind upon this particular occasion and hence formed the subject of his discourse, and what sent away Gellius and other eager seekers after knowledge *cultiores et doctiores*, as Gellius himself says, was the question whether such words as *harena* and *caelum* should ever be used in the plural, or such as *quadrigae* and *inimicitiae* in the singular!

Of Gellius's life we know but little. That little is derived chiefly from chance references in his only work, the *Noctes Atticae*. From them we learn that he was in Rome when he assumed the *toga virilis* (18.4.1), but whether or not he was born in Rome cannot even be inferred. The date of his birth is a matter of pure conjecture. It is usually placed at about 130 A.D.<sup>6</sup>. As young men had been doing for over two centuries, he 'finished' with a University education at Athens.

<sup>1</sup>Marius the Epicurean, Chapter XV.

<sup>2</sup>See Henry Nettleship, *Lectures and Essays on Subjects Connected with Latin Literature and Scholarship*, 276 (Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1883). The passage occurs in a paper entitled *The Noctes Atticae of Aulus Gellius* (248-276), originally printed in *American Journal of Philology*, Volume 4 (1883).

<sup>3</sup>19.8.1. See also 13.29; 2.26.

<sup>4</sup>Nettleship (249) thinks that he was born about 123.

<sup>1</sup>This paper was read at the Twentieth Annual Meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States, held at the University of Pennsylvania, April 30-May 1, 1926.

<sup>2</sup>On Fronto as an archaist, and on the relations between Gellius and Fronto see my remarks in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY* 15.188-189. C. K. >.

This must have taken place sometime after the consulship of Herodes Atticus (143), since the latter is spoken of in several places<sup>7</sup> as *vir consularis*. Gellius went through the usual course of grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy. Scattered through the twenty books of his miscellany are allusions to his many teachers and professors, both at Rome and at Athens. Among the more prominent of his teachers in grammar was the learned Carthaginian scholar, Sulpicius Apollinaris<sup>8</sup>, who later had as a pupil one who was to be the Emperor Pertinax. In rhetoric the two oftenest mentioned are Antonius Julianus<sup>9</sup>, for whom he seems to have had a warm personal attachment, and Titus Castricius<sup>10</sup>, the acknowledged successor of Fronto as the leading professor of Rome. Under Calvisius Taurus he studied Aristotle and Plato at Athens<sup>11</sup>. At Athens, too, he came into contact with that most brilliant and fascinating figure of his time, Tiberius Claudius Atticus Herodes, the celebrated rhetorician, who numbered among his pupils Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, and had been raised to the consulship by Antoninus Pius, in 143. He possessed enormous wealth, most of which he spent in embellishing his native Athens, building for his beloved city the Odeon, a stadium, and many other structures, being therefore a prime mover in an architectural and cultural renaissance which followed close upon the time when Hadrian had taken the city to his heart and his attention. Gellius has left us (1.2.1) an interesting description of Herodes's villa, Cephisia, telling how he and several other Roman students were the guests of the great scholar and benefactor of Athens, and how they enjoyed a refuge from the mid-summer heat in the cool and spacious rooms of the villa and in its shaded walks, with sound of singing birds and splashing water everywhere.

But this was in the summer. No less irksome to the young student, though for a different reason, were the long winter nights. As he himself tells us, in his Praefatio (4), he started his collection of miscellaneous information culled from his note-books to while away the winter evenings. Hence came the title 'Attic Nights', which Gellius himself feels to be rather neat, in view of the many far-fetched titles which other authors, in their search for the striking and the unusual, had bestowed upon their labors. Indeed, he goes out of his way to mention a needlessly long list of these, such as 'Forests', 'Broidered Robes', 'Cornucopiae', 'Ancient Readings', 'Treasure Trove', 'Patchwork', 'Hodgepodge', 'Tutti Frutti', 'Commonplaces', 'A Question Medley'.

Gellius's student life at Athens must have been most pleasant and agreeable. Certainly the historical and cultural import of the city and its atmosphere of scholarly calm must have been far different from the noise and bustle of the world's capital. The many opportunities presented by splendid libraries and the lectures of learned men were eagerly grasped by young men of the stamp of Gellius, men to whom grammar

was but the study of ancient forms, and rhetoric the means of knowing how best to use them. In this passion for the primitive, as in similar outbreaks in modern art, the matter of form became paramount. One really wonders whether the rather bald, dry, and often harsh and crabbed sentences of a Cato pleased their ears with anything more than a sense of something *outré* and with a rather childish delight in having found something different, something older and plainer, hence better, than their artificial and overwrought civilization had to offer them. And so, as Nettleship says (276), "... The age has no vigour of its own, but builds the sepulchres of the prophets, and waits for inspiration to rise from their dust ..."

Such an age produces men of pedantic minds, of sterile scholarship, and unimaginative literary output. Industrious ferreting among dry bones of mouldering literature is at a premium, originality of thought or of treatment is not. Had we many such miscellanies as that of Gellius, we should perish of weariness, or we should read not at all, but, because his has survived, we are his debtors for many an odd bit of information otherwise lost, many a tale from Roman history, many a piece of grammatical lore argued with a vehemence worthy of more substantial matters, but chiefly are we indebted to him for many a quotation from authors, Greek and Latin, whose works have perished save for such fragments as Gellius preserves.

Of course, Gellius was not responsible for this act of fate, either in regard to his own work or in regard to the work of others. But this we must say to his credit: he was scrupulously accurate in quotation, and, on the whole, conscientious. He has been accused of lack of method and carelessness, but he makes no claim either to method or to care. He is constantly depreciating his own abilities, and the readiness with which commentators and authors of histories of Latin literature have taken him at his own valuation would seem to relieve him of the charge of hypocrisy on that score. Mercklin<sup>12</sup>, indeed, goes so far as to accuse Gellius of a literary pilfering and an attempt to cover up his tracks by relating what Simcox<sup>13</sup> calls "a very pretty story" of how, while, on his return from Greece to Rome, he was waiting at Brundisium, he had picked up some books containing certain wonderful stories from Aristaeas, Onesicritus, Hegesias, and others (9.4). Gellius quotes from them at length; but the same stories are found in Pliny the Elder, in the same order. Indeed, Gellius himself adds, 'What I found written in these books I afterwards read in the seventh book of Plinius Secundus's Natural History'. But a comparison of the two passages shows such difference in language and in treatment that the most natural, as well as the most charitable, conclusion is that the two writers had made their excerpts from the same authorities, and hence that Gellius was telling the truth when he said, 'I afterwards read ... in Pliny'.

Gellius, then, had the note-book habit. At lectures,

<sup>7</sup>1.2.1; 19.12.1.

<sup>8</sup>7.6.12; 20.6.1; 2.16.8; 13.18.3; 18.4.1. Compare 12.13.1.

<sup>9</sup>1.4.1; 9.1.2; 19.9.2; 15.1.1; 9.15.1; 18.5.1.

<sup>10</sup>11.13.1; 13.22.1. Compare 1.6.4.

<sup>11</sup>7.13.1; 17.8.1; 19.6.2.

<sup>12</sup>Jahrbücher für Classische Philologie, Supplementband 3 (1860), 641-644. The paper was published separately by Teubner, Leipzig, 1860.

<sup>13</sup>G. A. Simcox, History of Latin Literature, 2.270 (in the edition issued by Harper and Brothers, New York, 1883).



at recitations, in his study hours, poring over fine manuscripts, browsing in the bookstalls; in attendance at the law-courts, he had his tablets with him. We can picture him earnestly, conscientiously, carefully jotting down an odd fact, a nicely turned phrase, a grammatical subtlety of the sort that the age loved—in short, we may picture him as a bit of a Boswell in his habits, if we may move forward sixteen centuries for a parallel. That he began filling note-books long before the idea of publishing their contents occurred to him, and filled them for sheer pleasure and self-satisfaction without a thought to logical and orderly arrangement either of topic or author cited is evident not only from his own statement of method, or lack of it, but from the occasional lack of consistency or coherence within a passage itself. But the passages are usually so short and the excerpts so brief that this charge cannot be leveled at many. In his Preface he says (§ 2):

'... I have used my material as it came to hand, in the fortuitous order in which I had taken my notes. For, as I had picked up some Greek or Latin book or had heard something worth remembering, at any time, I jotted down roughly and at random whatever caught my fancy, and these notes I kept as an aid to memory—a sort of literary larder, as it were—, that, when I needed either a fact or a word forgetfulness of which suddenly chanced to hold me in its grasp, and the books from which I had taken the facts were not at hand, I might be able to locate them readily <in my note-books> and to make my excerpts'.

Elsewhere in his Preface (§ 1) he states that he is doing this not only for his own pleasure, but for the highly moral purpose of instructing the young, the young in this case being his own children. He says also (§§ 22-24) that he has written twenty books and hopes to write more, if he shall have sufficient length of life and ability to continue the task. Now twenty books is exactly what has come down to us (not *in toto*: of Book 8 only the *Capitula* remain), nor is there any record of additional books having been written or published. We can only surmise either that he failed in later life to execute his promise, or that death cut short the work. How long he was at the task of collecting and gathering notes for his published volumes we have no way of knowing. Presumably his work continued for some years after his return from University days in Greece, for the number of items to which a Roman locale is given is so great that the matters involved can not all have taken place in his boyhood days as a student of grammar with Sulpicius Apollinaris and others.

During the years that followed at Rome, Gellius must often have thought with longing of his student days. Many of the pleasantest allusions scattered throughout the *Noctes Atticae* are to incidents and events of his stay in Greece. We have mentioned his visit to the country home of Herodes Atticus. During another visit to the same villa he was seized with a sort of intermittent fever (1.18.10). Calvisius Taurus and several of his followers came to visit the invalid, and promptly entered into a conversation with the doctor concerning the nature of such fevers, in the course of which Taurus took occasion to correct his

use of the word 'vein' for 'artery' when he mentioned the pulse. Thereupon follow some general remarks to the effect that those who think that, when they are gauging some one's pulse, they are feeling a vein rather than an artery, are greatly in error.

Upon still another occasion (2.9.2), a certain long-haired fellow, clad in a *pallium* and wearing a beard that reached below his waist, approached Herodes and begged alms. Herodes asked, 'And who may you be?' In pained surprise the would-be philosopher replied that he thought that was sufficiently obvious from his clothing and his appearance. Herodes retorted, 'I see the beard and the cloak, but not yet the philosopher'.

Gellius speaks too (15.2.3) of monthly gatherings of the students in *conviviis iuvenum*. At one of these general discussion-groups a fellow-student from Crete, who claimed to be a Platonic philosopher and boasted (to Gellius's evident annoyance) of his knowledge of Greek, advanced the theory that "a little drunkenness now and then, is relished by the best of men", feeling that "the feast of reason and flow of wit" is aided, rather than impeded, by a corresponding flow of wine, and basing all this on certain passages in praise of conviviality that he had taken from Plato's *De Legibus*.

At another time (12.11) Gellius visited that erratic and enigmatical philosopher Peregrinus Proteus (Gellius, however, terms him *vir gravis atque constans*), in the latter's cottage outside the city. There the old, old question of whether or not sin will out is discussed, and Sophocles is quoted. Gellius closes his account, which in this case is all too brief, with the sage remark, perhaps proverbial in his time<sup>14</sup>, 'Another of the-poets of old, whose name I have forgotten, said that Truth is the daughter of Time'. We are half-inclined to regret the loss of Book 8, Chapter 3, in which, according to the *Capitulum*, we should be treated to an account of how Peregrinus rebuked a young Roman of equestrian family who did nothing but stand about and yawn.

The young Roman students in Athens made the arrival of the Saturnalia in December an occasion for dinner-parties. Gellius has left us two accounts of such affairs, which were far from being the riotous bouts that one might expect of students. In 18.2 he says,

'... We were celebrating the Saturnalia at Athens joyously, to be sure, but modestly, not, as the saying goes, letting our minds run loose—for to let one's mind run loose, declares Musonius, is, as it were, to lose one's mind—, but relaxing them little by little and relieving them by the agreeable and honest charm of conversation. Quite a number of the Roman students who had come to Greece and were attending the same lectures and the same professors were assembled at that dinner'.

The principal recreation seems to have been proposing conundrums and awarding a laurel wreath to the successful solver. If no one succeeded, the crown was bestowed upon the god of the festival. The conundrums themselves were almost childish in their futility, if we may take those cited by Gellius as typical. Examples are (18.13.5), 'What is snow is not hail; now snow is

<sup>14</sup>Compare A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und Sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer*, 343 (Teubner, Leipzig, 1890).

white; therefore hail is not white', and 'What is man is not horse; but man is an animal; therefore a horse is not an animal'. The subtleties of such a question as 'When I lie and say that I lie, am I lying or telling the truth?' (18.2.10) would undoubtedly serve to keep the conversation from flagging. The propounding of such riddles gives Gellius an opportunity to lead up to the story (18.13.7-8) of the tart but witty reply of Diogenes to a certain dialectician who annoyed him by saying, 'What I am, you are not; now I am a man; therefore you are not a man'. 'Of course', says Diogenes, 'that is obviously false. If you want to make it come true, start with yourself'.

That the students took many trips and visited many famous spots and saw all that Greece had to offer in the way of art and worship cannot be doubted. Upon at least one occasion Gellius visited Eleusis (8.10); probably he did so many times, because of its nearness to Athens, though we have no record of his having been in the town more than once. We know that he set out at one time for Delphi (12.5), under the tutelage of Calvisius Taurus, to see the Pythian games. Hearing of the sickness of a friend, Taurus turned aside to the ancient Boeotian town of Lebadia, where his friend lay ill, 'and', remarks Gellius naively, *nos de more, quem in locum cumque iret, secuti sumus*. This incident gives Gellius an opportunity to quote Taurus at length on the subject of bearing pain with Stoical fortitude.

But perhaps the pleasantest and most natural reminiscence in the *Noctes Atticae* is the account of a boating-trip to Aegina (2.21). The scene is the deck of the vessel, homeward-bound.

'Quite a number of us, Greeks and Romans both, who were studying the same subjects, were crossing in the same vessel from Aegina to Piraeus. It was night and the sea was smooth; it was summer, and the sky was clear and cloudless. So we all sat together on deck and looked at the shining stars'.

The conversation then turns naturally to the subject of stars, and there is a discussion of the derivation of *septentriones*, the common Latin appellation of the constellation known to us as the Big Dipper, or the Great Bear, *Ursa Maior*, or Charles's Wain.

But student days abroad must come to an end sometime and one must return to the homeland, there to pursue an active career. So Gellius returned to Italy via Brundisium, perhaps taking ship for that port from Patrae. This small Achaean town, we know from references in Cicero<sup>15</sup>, was used to a great extent as a landing-place by persons making the trip from Greece to Italy. At any rate, Gellius tells us (18.9.5) that he once found in a library at Patrae a fine manuscript of undoubted antiquity and authenticity containing the *Odyssey* of Livius Andronicus. What caught his eye and what he undoubtedly copied straightway into his note-book against a day of future use was a line from this early author in which *insece* was spelled with a *c* instead of with *qu*. Such material was grist for the mill in an age "when books themselves tend in ever-increasing measure to become the absorbing subject of pure literature . . ."<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup>Ad Atticum 5.9, 7.2; Ad Familiares 16.6, etc.

<sup>16</sup>Simcox, as cited in Note 13, 2.266.

The crossing of the Ionian Sea took place from Cassiopa in Epirus to Brundisium. Gellius gives this setting to two of his most amusing accounts. In the first (16.6) a certain literary man for whom Gellius entertains but slight regard, summoned from Rome by the town of Brundisium, perhaps for purposes of public instruction, is entertaining the somewhat sea-sick travelers with a reading from Aeneid 7. Gellius, having nothing better to do, listens for the sake of amusement. As the learned gentleman was reading *barbare insci-lique* (to use Gellius's own words), the latter interrupts with a question and proceeds to pick a quarrel with him over the meaning of *bidentes* (Aeneid 7.93). In the second passage (19.1) we have a description of the rough and stormy trip from Greece to Italy which, in the light boats of those days, must have seemed to the Romans, who were not fond of sea-traveling, even more formidable than the dreaded Channel crossing to-day. 'We were sailing across the violent, vast, and tossing Ionian Sea from Cassiopa to Brundisium. It was the night following our first day at sea, and during almost all of it the wind, blowing in hard on the side, had filled the ship with water. Then later, as we were all complaining and struggling feverishly to bail out the ship, day, if day it could be called, at length dawned. But the wind abated not a bit of its turbulence or its danger; rather did the gusts seem more frequent, and the black sky and the sizzling balls of lightning and certain fearsome cloud-figures, which are called typhoons, seemed to lower and threaten to sink the ship'.

Now there was on board a certain Stoic philosopher whom Gellius had known at Athens. As the storm continued, he became sick and pale and rather frightened. After the storm had subsided, a rich merchant-prince from Asia, their fellow-passenger, who had witnessed this exhibition of fright, asked the philosopher, rather pointedly, 'Why is it that, when we were in danger, you were afraid and turned pale? I wasn't afraid, nor did I turn pale'. The philosopher debated a moment whether or not to dignify the remark with an answer, but finally replied,

' . . . If I seemed a bit scared during such a violent storm, you are not worthy of hearing the reason why. But Aristippus has answered you for me, for when under similar circumstances he was asked by a man very much like yourself why a philosopher should be afraid when he on the contrary feared nothing, Aristippus replied that their reasons were different, since he was not greatly solicitous for the soul of a worthless nobody, but what worried him was the soul of Aristippus'.

Later, when Gellius encountered the same Stoic in the streets of Brundisium, he made bold to ask the philosopher his reasons for such a reply. The latter, evidently feeling somewhat better now that he was on terra firma, answered the young student more kindly, and drew from his wallet, or traveling-bag, copies of Epictetus and Arrian's digest of the writings of Zeno and Chrysippus, and urged him to read these great Stoic authorities, that he might understand and remember.

So Gellius returned to Rome to found a family and enter upon a career. Just what this career was is not quite clear. There are vague references to a legal career<sup>17</sup>; we know that he once received an appointment

<sup>17</sup>13.13.1; 11.3.1; 16.10.1; Praefatio 12.

as *index a consulibus extra ordinem datus* (12.13.1), but there is no mention anywhere that he held high office, or even that he entered upon the *cursus honorum*. That he employed his leisure time in continuing the compilation of his Attic Nights and in pursuing his studies, especially in philosophy and in grammar, is fairly evident from several passages<sup>18</sup>, of which the following (11.3) is perhaps best representative of the manner in which the educated Roman pursued his—alas, too often dilettante—study of books and bookish learning. It also throws an interesting sidelight upon the kind of thinking done in the second century, the sort of thing that interested men like Gellius, and, in its general inconclusiveness, is typical of the mental habits of the times.

'Whenever there is respite from legal and business affairs, and for the sake of exercise we either walk or ride, it is ever my wont to consider with myself small matters of this sort—minutiae, so to speak, despised by poorly educated men, but necessary for penetrating deep within the meaning of olden writers and of prime importance for a knowledge of the Latin language. For instance, I chanced recently to be taking an evening stroll alone in <my?> retreat at Praeneste<sup>19</sup> and I fell to pondering the variety of certain particles in the Latin tongue both as to kind and number'.

We see how in such a situation Gellius's mind naturally turns to a purely grammatical question. He considers then the different uses of *pro*, and decides that those persons are in error who think that the uses of *pro* are either all alike or all different. For himself, he feels that they can be explained upon a common principle, and yet are not absolutely identical. He concludes, rather smugly, I fear, thus:

'... This is, of course, easily intelligible to any one who applies his mental effort to contemplation and who has a rather good knowledge of the language as spoken in days gone by, and experience in handling it'.

It was probably after Gellius's return to Rome that he fell under the influence of the Sophist Favorinus. This philosopher was one of the greatest teachers and writers of his time. His dates are very uncertain; some think that he began teaching in Rome during Trajan's reign<sup>20</sup>. This would make him nearly fifty years older than Gellius. Be that as it may, a warm personal attachment seems to have arisen between the great man and his younger contemporary (16.3.1).

Favorinus was a product of the provinces. Born at what is now Arles in Southern France, he received his early education at Marseilles, and acquired that facility in Greek that was the admiration and the despair of Gellius (14.1.1). For the facts of his life we must rely largely upon the accounts of Philostratus<sup>21</sup>, and Suidas. But it is in Gellius that the references to him are especially numerous.

Favorinus has been called the one original feature of Gellius's compilation. Certainly there does seem to be an attempt to enliven many of the accounts by giving

them a sort of dramatic setting, but I do not think that we need assume with Nettleship (252) that the scenes are wholly fictitious. We know enough of Roman life to be certain that men did meet in the Forum, at the baths, in libraries, at receptions, at dinners, and discuss just such matters as Gellius puts into the mouth of his friend Favorinus and others. It is mostly the talk of loungers in public places or educated men taking their ease during periods of recreation and at meal-time. Granted that it is a purely literary device, that Gellius may show lack of skill in handling it, and that the antagonists in these conversational duels are for the most part men of straw after the model of the rhetorical Schools, still the fact remains that we have here the only human touch in what would otherwise be an arid desert of grammatical lore, with oases few and far between. To assume that the settings are all artificial, and that the anecdotes, descriptions, and even dialogues are imaginary is to credit Gellius with some measure of that originality which commentators seem so unanimously unwilling to grant him. I think we have here rather the honest attempt of a man of limited literary resources, but a man of no pretensions to style or ability, writing in a straightforward fashion after the model of the ancient writers so greatly admired by his age, to enliven his scraps of information by presenting them to us under the guise of incidents of his own personal recollection, of the sort that must have occurred many times in the literary-academic life in which he mingled. Taken together they give us the nearest thing we have to an authentic picture of his life, his pursuits, and the sphere wherein he moved, which in themselves constitute a commentary on the literary and scholastic life of the Age of the Antonines, and enable us more accurately to gauge its real value and to measure its shortcomings and its virtues.

Let us, then, examine some of the passages which have a setting in the busy life of Rome, or in vacation visits to the country villas of friends. We have record of at least two visits to the estate of the learned poet Julius Paulus in *agro Vaticano*. Upon one of these (16.10), Gellius 'knocks off' for a holiday and pays a reverential visit to his friend, where he finds a congenial company, who have a most delightful time discussing the difference between *proletarii* and *capite censi*, and also the exact meaning of the word *adsiduus* as used in the Twelve Tables. The whole discussion centers in a passage in Ennius, which, fortunately for us, is quoted, though only to the extent of two and a half lines. At another time (19.7), he and his friend Julius Celsinus go out to Paulus's for dinner. There at table they hear the Alcestis of Laevius read, and upon their return to the city after sunset they meditate upon some of the archaic expressions of this old poet. Such is the introductory paragraph of this section, giving us a situation which is realistic enough to have occurred many a time, if not actually upon this particular occasion, certainly upon some other. What possible motive would Gellius have for inventing pretty tales of his visits and conversations?

He visited also the poet Annianus, who possessed a

<sup>18</sup>16.3.1; 1.21.4; perhaps, also, 3.16.13.

<sup>19</sup>Some see in this passage a reference to a country retreat of Gellius at Praeneste. But he may have been there merely upon a vacation or upon a visit.

<sup>20</sup>W. Schmid, in Pauly-Wissowa, Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft, 6.2079.

<sup>21</sup>Vitae Sophistarum 1.8.



*fundus in agro Falisco* (20.8). At the time of vintage Gellius and some of his friends go out to help celebrate. Oysters, fresh from the markets in Rome, are served. The host apologizes for their meager size by explaining that the oysters were gathered at the waning of the moon, and quotes Lucilius in support of this ancient superstition that there are in nature certain things which increase or diminish in size as the moon waxes or wanes.

But, as previously stated, the greatest number of passages has to do with the acute and learned scholar Favorinus. He was the author of many works dealing with matters of grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy, having been apparently one of the most prolific writers of his time. We know the titles, but have not the contents, of most of his learned treatises. One of these, *Περὶ ὁμιλίας* 'Ictropla, is believed by Nettleship (251) to have suggested to Gellius the form of his *Noctes Atticae*, and, perhaps, even, to have supplied much of the contents.

The attraction of such a personality for a man of Gellius's stamp must have been very great. Certainly his influence is everywhere apparent in Gellius's work. We have the latter's own acknowledgment of this (16.3.1):

'We used to spend our days at Rome almost entirely with Favorinus; our minds were enthralled by this sweetest of human speakers, and, wherever he went, we followed, captivated, as it were, by his tongue, so charmed were we continually by his most delightful conversation'.

Although Favorinus is often mentioned as holding forth in various public places *nobis praesentibus* or *nobis audientibus*, yet Gellius's attachment for him seems to have been a more personal one, perhaps like that of the faithful young Scotchman for his revered Dr. Johnson, for upon several occasions Gellius speaks of himself, not as one of a crowd of students or listeners, but as the sole companion of the Sophist in his rambles about town or in his little journeys into the homes of the great. Upon one occasion (2.26) Favorinus asks him to go with him to call upon Fronto, who is *pedibus aeger*, ill with gout, probably. There the two scholars engage in a rather lengthy discussion of the comparative merits of Greek and Latin in the matter of exactness of words of color. Favorinus, excellent Greek scholar that he was, who by preference lectured in Greek, even as Marcus Aurelius by preference wrote in that tongue, argued in behalf of the language he loved. Fronto, despite his age and his illness, takes up the cudgels for his native Latin. Can we not picture Gellius on the sidelines, so to speak, eagerly taking it all in, and making notes, either mental or actual, for future use, and later, when opportunity offered, looking up the references in the authors quoted, and combining these with excerpts from his note-books into just such a passage for his *Noctes Atticae* as we have here? Once again (19.10) he makes Fronto's bedroom the scene of a disputation in a passage interesting to us because of its mention of an architect's models for proposed new baths. To Gellius that is purely incidental: his main interest lies in Fronto's use of the archaic preposition

*praeterpropter*. But we cannot complain of this interest, for we are the gainers by an eight-line quotation from the *Iphigenia* of Ennius.

But into many another place did the old scholar and his youthful *seclator* go together. Once they paid a visit to a noble family into which a baby had just been born (12.1). As the husband is one of his own pupils, Favorinus feels perfectly at home, and remarks that, of course, the mother will nurse her own child. The grandmother strongly disapproves of his remarks, whereupon she is promptly overwhelmed with a long sermon delivered in the best manner of Rousseau discoursing on the duties of mothers toward their children. This is delivered so beautifully and so eloquently in Greek that Gellius at the end feels impelled to apologize for his Latin rendering. Again Favorinus holds forth in Greek, this time against the Chaldeans (14.1), and again Gellius turns his phrases into Latin.

Let us see the two at the Emperor's morning reception<sup>20</sup>. While they were standing in *area Palatina*, *cum salutationem Caesaris opperiremur*, Favorinus and Sextus Caecilius engage in a wordy, though friendly, battle on matters connected with the Twelve Tables. As Caecilius was a trained lawyer, the matter would seem to lie largely within his special province, but Favorinus was never backward about expressing an opinion in any field of knowledge. Again (3.1), in one of Rome's many bathing establishments, as they were taking a stroll in the pleasant warmth of a late winter sun, they spy a friend with a copy of Sallust's *Catiline* in his hand. Favorinus bids him read, but stops him at a certain place, and proceeds to expound to the group that have gathered the real meaning of the passage.

Favorinus had a villa at Antium. Gellius doubtless often visited him there. In one case (17.10) this led to a rather interesting comparison between Vergil's description of Mt. Aetna (*Aeneid* 3.570-577) and Pindar's (*Pythia* 1.21). At another time they were taking an evening stroll along the shore at Ostia (18.1). A philosophical squabble arose between two members of the party, one a Stoic, the other a Peripatetic. Favorinus, forced to arbitrate, held forth until the gathering shades of night drove them indoors.

As can readily be imagined, two of Gellius's favorite haunts were bookshops and libraries. In one such shop, *apud Sigillaria*, he sat down, and chatted with his poet friend Julius Paulus on a matter of grammar (5.4). In another he meets a braggart, and a dispute over the meaning of something in Varro develops (13.31). In still another (18.4) he recalls having heard in his early student days Sulpicius Apollinaris 'dress down' with a great deal of Socratic display a superficial pretender to antiquarian knowledge who tried to show off on a passage in Sallust.

Seated one day in the great library of the Temple of Trajan (11.17), Gellius and some friends were amusing themselves by idly running through old praetorian edicts on file there, or anything else that came into their hands. A discussion soon arose as to the precise meaning of a phrase found in one of them. In the library of

<sup>20</sup>20.1. Compare 4.1; 19.13.



the Domus Tiberiana (13.20) he and Apollinaris talk over the names of the various members of the *familia Porcia*. The library of the Templum Pacis is mentioned twice (16.8.2; 5.21.9), as is the library in the Temple of Hercules at Tibur (9.14.3; 19.5.4).

Oftentimes the meeting-place is a street corner by a shrine or a temple<sup>23</sup>, more often, of course, in the Fora<sup>24</sup>. But the most frequent meeting-place was at that great Roman institution, the *cena*<sup>25</sup>. At the dinner-table readings from old authors were the favorite recreation; there disputations about grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy waxed hot; there was opportunity for that table-talk so dear to the heart of Gellius when it fell in eloquent periods from the lips of his revered models in style and practice. Did time and space permit, many of these might be looked at more closely with interest and profit to ourselves, but I think that enough has been given to indicate to some extent the sort of individual that Gellius was. It is only by piecing together these chance personal allusions that we know anything of his life, and it is only by examining the settings to many of his odd scraps of information that we gain what I believe to be, in the main, a true picture of the life and interests of a literary man of the Age of the Antonines.

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## REVIEWS

Anatolian Studies Presented to Sir William Ramsay. Edited by W. H. Buckler and W. M. Calder. Manchester <England>: at the University Press; London and New York: Longmans, Green and Company (1923). Pp. xxxviii+479. 14 Plates.

In the volume entitled Anatolian Studies Presented to Sir William Ramsay, we have a Table of Contents (vii-viii), List of Plates (ix), List of the Commoner Abbreviations Used in This Volume (xi-xii), A List of the Published Writings of Sir William Mitchell Ramsay, Compiled by A. Margaret Ramsay (xiii-xxviii), and, finally, the Anatolian Studies, thirty-two papers in all, followed by Index I, Names of Persons (459-468), Index II, Names of Places, etc. (469-477), Index III, Inscriptions Cited in *Extenso* (478-479).

It is never possible to review, in adequate fashion, such a volume as this. Scholars competent to discuss all the papers contained in it would, surely, be rare as angels' visits. In the present volume the papers are in English, German, and French.

Papers of wider appeal are the following:

Some Questions Bearing on the Date and Place of Composition of Strabo's *Geography*, J. G. C. Anderson (1-13); Labour Disputes in the Province of Asia, W. H. Buckler (27-50); The Elevated Columns at Sardis and the Sculptured Pedestals from Ephesus, Howard Crosby Butler (51-57); The Epigraphy of the Anatolian Heresies (59-91); The Lydian Language, J. Fraser (139-150); The Hittites and Egypt, H. R. Hall (165-185); The Hittite Monuments of Southern Asia Minor, D. Hogarth (225-238); Skepsis in the Troad, W. Leaf (267-281); The Assyrians in Asia Minor, A. T.

Olmstead (283-296); Two New Epitaphs from Sardis, D. M. Robinson (341-353); Notes on the Economic Policy of the Pergamene Kings, M. Rostovtzeff (359-390); The Languages of Asia Minor, A. H. Sayce (391-397).

Of the writers named above several are Americans, or at least are now connected with American Universities: A. T. Olmstead, D. M. Robinson, M. Rostovtzeff. Howard Crosby Butler will be remembered as the American scholar who conducted the excavations at Sardis. William Hepburn Buckler, one of the editors of the volume, is an American, who was born in France. In 1910-1914 he was a member of the American Expedition to Sardis. He collaborated with Professor D. M. Robinson in publishing, in the *American Journal of Archaeology*, the inscriptions found by that expedition.

Some account of this volume was given in The *American Historical Review* 30.117-119 (October, 1924), by Professor W. W. Hyde, of the University of Pennsylvania. This notice gives an excellent summary of the contents of certain of the papers. In The *Classical Review* 38.187-189 (November-December, 1924), the volume was noticed by Mr. J. A. R. Munro.

CHARLES KNAPP

Greek Social Life. By F. A. Wright. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co. (1925). Pp. 243.

Nothing in the study of a civilization, ancient or modern, is more important than to attempt a critical appraisal of its values; and nothing is more difficult. Are we to collect as large a mass of material as possible, to strike the average of the evidence that it presents, and to say, That is Greek life? or This is the American point of view? Should we rather ignore the average man, and by giving all our attention to the nobler figures and the more profound thinkers justify ourselves in saying Here is all that really matters in our study? The former attitude may be that of the historian, the latter of the philosopher or of the reformer; both are incomplete.

The novice who wishes to know something about Greek civilization may choose among several different approaches. He may read one of the modern systematic expositions of Greek daily life, and gain an orderly conception of the more superficial phases of the civilization. If he feels that such an approach gives no insight into personality and little insight into tendencies or values, he may turn to the masterpieces of the literature. In such a case he may welcome so convenient and entertaining a source-book as Mr. Wright's, for here he will find translated a number of passages ranging from Homer to the Alexandrian and the Roman periods, all chosen for their human interest and for their vivid presentation of social relationships. The authors represented are for the most part familiar: Homer, Hesiod, the gnomic poets, Simonides of Amorgos, Herodotus, Aristophanes, Xenophon, the Attic Orators (with whom the Characters of Theophrastus are strangely included), Theocritus, Herodas, the schoolboy's letter from Oxyrhynchus, and Dion of Prusa. Athens

<sup>23</sup>E. g. *apud sanum Carmentis* (18.7).

<sup>24</sup>In the Forum Augusti (9.11.10); in the Forum Traiani (13.25.1).

<sup>25</sup>2.22; 3.19; 9.9; 17.8; 20.8; etc.

of the fifth and fourth centuries receives, and probably deserves, about three-fourths of Mr. Wright's book. Brief introductory and transitional notes do something to supply a context for the passages. Probably the novice will need, however, more help than Mr. Wright gives him to the understanding of details; there are no footnotes. The 64 pages of Aristophanes, for example, abound in stumbling-blocks for the uninitiated.

More serious is the danger, unsuspected by the uninitiated, of assuming that these passages, or that any other passages, however well chosen, can be accepted without interpretation as expressing Greek civilization or even Greek social life in the narrower sense. As most students of Greek and Latin, and indeed as too many of their teachers tend to dismiss their authors as soon as they have translated them, without proceeding to weigh, to compare, to interpret, so many a reader of Mr. Wright's book may mistakenly suppose that the compiler has finished, rather than merely begun, the task of presenting the subject. Mr. Wright himself appears to realize this danger; and his brief Introduction (i-xvi) gives an illuminating sketch of the structure of Athenian society, in the light of which his Selections may be read, concluding with a terse appraisal of the merits and the flaws in Greek social life. One is inclined to agree, on the whole, with his remark that "a study of the passages contained in this volume will probably show at least as many things to avoid as to imitate". Why? That is a question for the reader to ponder. He will wish to connect Greek social life with Greek history and religion and philosophy, and to compare them with modern civilizations. Provided that the mature reader approach Mr. Wright's book in such a spirit, or that a student read it under the guidance of a teacher who can help him to such an interpretation, it will give both enjoyment and enlightenment.

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WILLIAM CHASE GREENE

Guide for the Study of English Books on Roman Private Life. By Walton Brooks McDaniel. New York: The Service Bureau for Classical Teachers, Teachers College, Columbia University (1926). Pp. 51. Bound in Paper. 25 cents.

Contemporary scholarship is busily engaged not only in original investigation, but also in making restatements in more or less popular and readable form of the findings of specialists. Aids to classical studies are now so numerous that we need aids to the aids. As books continue to issue from the press, it will become increasingly necessary for competent scholars in various subjects to take periodic inventories of our stock.

The private life of the ancients is a most interesting and valuable field of study for classical students. A knowledge of it is worth while, but to acquire it calls for effort. It will not come subconsciously through

reading the love stories of a dozen historical novels. Fortunately we are getting away from the Victorian idea that there is any special virtue or instruction in reading a book that merely entertains us.

Professor McDaniel's Guide is intended (5) to meet primarily "the needs of high schools and colleges and of the general reader who has no command of any language but English". Dictionaries of classical antiquities are mentioned, but no specific references are given to them under the topical headings. For obvious reasons there are no references to periodical literature. The formal Bibliography (6-10) lists 52 books, to which there are 674 topical references (11-51), conveniently grouped under such rubrics as Agriculture, Amusements, Aqueducts, Architecture, Art, Athletics, Banking, Baths, and the like. Any teacher who has access to about twenty of the books mentioned will be able to find material on many aspects of Roman private life. Incidentally the Guide may awaken teachers to the necessity of filling in the gaping lacunae in their School libraries.

Professor William Stearns Davis's *A Day in Old Rome* doubtless appeared too late to be included in the Guide. It contains twenty-three well-arranged chapters that will be helpful to both student and teacher<sup>1</sup>.

Dr. McDaniel's pamphlet is not merely a guide for those who need guidance because of inexperience; it is also a great time-saver for the mature scholar who wishes to find things quickly. For those giving courses in Roman private life it will be invaluable. It fills its purpose admirably and adequately. I believe that it will be a trail-blazer for other works of the same general character.

We are now able to find in cheap and handy form satisfactory treatments of Roman chairs, tables, and beds. I believe that the time has come for us to devote more attention to the mental furniture of the plebeian and peasant Gaius, Marcus, and Lucius, to his outlook on life, his psychology, and perhaps his "I. Q.". The type of study I have in mind may be aptly illustrated by Professor Eugene Tavenner's paper, *The Roman Farmer and the Moon*<sup>2</sup>. Much material of this nature may be found in Pliny's *Natural History*, which, however, is generally regarded as a musty and dusty book (and generally is such, through sheer neglect). I venture the assertion that any alert student of Roman life who reads Pliny with a note-pad at his elbow will feel well rewarded by a freshened insight into many things. Our knowledge of the private life of the ordinary Roman is destined to be more or less one-sided until we complement it by many more systematic studies of his ideas, motives, impulses, and beliefs.

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EUGENE S. MCCARTNEY

<sup>1</sup>A review of this book, by Dr. McCartney, will appear in this volume of *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY*. C. K. >

<sup>2</sup>Transactions of the American Philological Association, 49, 67-82. <I may add a reference to Dr. McCartney's own papers in *THE CLASSICAL WEEKLY*, such as *The Classical Astral Weather Chart for Rustics and Seamen*, 20, 43-49, 51-54, and the others named on page 43, note 1. C. K. >